

To: Senator Prague, Representative Ryan, and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee

From: Walter Topliff, Assessor, Town of Bloomfield  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Connecticut Association of Assessing Officers

Date: 2/17/2010

Re: HB 5059 – AAC Municipal Assessor Appointments

Committee Members:

I speak before you today in support of HB 5059 An Act Concerning the Appointment of Municipal Assessors.

As a graduate of the University of Connecticut with a degree in Real Estate, I currently hold a commercial appraisal license in the State of Connecticut. For years I worked in the private sector and did very well financially. However, I made a career decision to move to the public sector because I felt a call to serve and recognize that the governmental sector needs qualified individuals administering the assessment and local property tax system.

I definitely made the right choice as I love working in the public sector and find it very rewarding. I have continually attempted to persuade many of my qualified real estate peers to pursue careers in the assessment profession only to be shot down by their fear of taking on a 2-4 year political appointment. For them, it appears too risky and is always for less money. Many assessors perform this job due to a love of the profession and a personal calling rather than financial gain.

In order to solidify the integrity of the future of the assessment process, I feel that this position must be changed from a political appointment to a non-political position requiring that the employee be appointed only once and eliminating "terms of office".

HB 5059 contains language requiring "good cause" for removal of the assessor. Good cause is something that appears to be controversial and personally, I do not think that language is necessary in order to achieve the goal of changing from political to apolitical. Therefore, I respectfully request that the committee support the concept of making this position apolitical and removing the "good cause" language.

I would like to thank the committee for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,  
Walter Topliff